



## **“Nationalizing” a Frontier Space- Frontier Agency to Arunachal Pradesh**

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### **Abstract**

*The North East Frontier Agency, now called as Arunachal Pradesh, did not have definite name till 1914. The colonial government neither had intent nor was it economically viable to extend its administration in the frontier areas. Even after the independence of India, no major thrust was launched to bring the areas under formal Indian administration. The tribal communities were allowed to “develop along the line of their genius, respecting their rights over land and forests”. A distinct administrative system-simple and people-friendly-was designed for administration in these areas. This developmental approach of this nature, however, was reviewed after Chinese attack on India in 1962. This paper argues that the policies and the underlying philosophy meant for the frontier people of Arunachal Pradesh were guided by “external considerations”. Firstly, policies were designed in such a way that they are not influenced by “anti-national voices” in Naga and Mizo hills. Secondly, it was the “Chinese factor” that primarily determined Government of India’s actions vis-à-vis Arunachal Pradesh. The paper also argues that the issue of refugees and “outsiders” needs to be resolved democratically keeping in view the interests and aspiration of all stake holders.*

**Keywords:** *Frontier, Administration, McMahon Line, Panchsheel.*

### **Introduction**

Arunachal Pradesh, as it stands today, is a product of diverse factors, as diverse as the state itself. Historically, it was neither a part of British India nor was under the Tibetan administration. The tribal communities lived a life of their own, occasionally indulging in inter-clan feuds over land, rivers and forests. Hudson aptly describes the position of the area during eighteen and nineteen centuries (Hudson, 1962: 203):

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... the NEFA country was not really either Indian or Chinese; it was not even Tibetan, but a zone of independent primitive tribes, too small and unorganized to form “states,” but strong enough in their inaccessible mountain strongholds to resist absorption by their more civilized neighbors to north and south.

The Ahoms<sup>i</sup> were neither interested in the day-to-day affairs of the tribal communities nor in their land. Ahom kings simply wanted to protect the people of plains from the raids of the tribals. Some of the Ahom rulers, in fact, attempted to establish good relations with frontier tribes. For example, Nyishis of the present-day Arunachal Pradesh were allowed to levy “posa”, a kind of tribute<sup>ii</sup>, by Pratap Singh, one of the Ahom rulers. At the later stage the right to “posa” was also conceded to the Akas, Adis, Nyishis, the Mishings and the Monpas. Some scholars have contended that the payment of ‘posa’ was an indication of acknowledgment of the territory inhabited by these tribes as an independent territory by the Ahoms.

### **Frontier Tracts to Statehood**

The “frontier” acquired its independent identity when, in 1914, the North East Frontier Tract (NEFT) was created by separating some tribal areas from the then Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of the province of Assam. The NEFT was designated to be administered directly and differently by the provincial governor, through the Commissioner or Deputy British Commissioner. The area was kept outside the purview of regular laws of the country and administered in different way by passing regulations and framing procedures from time to time. Before 1914, having not assigned any specific nomenclature, the region was designated as a “non-regulated area”, the area which was to be ruled by summary legislation in the discretion of the Governor. The powers under summary legislation authorized the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to prescribe a line called “Inner Line” in each or any of the districts beyond which no British subjects can pass without a Inner Line Permit. Thus, the *Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873*<sup>iii</sup> came into existence that laid down such lines in certain district of the province of Assam. The Regulation of 1873 for the first time separated some tracts inhabited by tribal people from the districts of Assam and the British authority.

In 1874, the Chief Commissioner’s province of Assam (comprising some of the eastern districts of Bengal) was constituted. *The Assam Frontier Tracts Regulation, 1880* was adopted and extended “to any tract inhabited or frequented by barbarous or semi-civilized tribes .....under the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner of Assam.” Under this Regulation, the Dibrugarh Frontier Tact was created in 1882, which was placed under the authority of the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, assisted by Assistant Political Officer posted at Sadiya. With the appointment of Francis Jack Needham as the Assistant Political Officer, an exclusive administrative officer was designated for the frontier tribes, who had been handled by the officials in adjacent areas on an adhoc basis.

After the independence of India, Arunachal Pradesh, then North Eastern Frontier Agency, not only remained a federally controlled territory but various measures were initiated to keep the area undisturbed and under strict grip of the political leadership in New

Delhi. Nehru's India largely retained the erstwhile British policy of exclusion. Except for what is called as "Forward Policy"<sup>iv</sup>, the administration had not penetrated deep into this sensitive territory and the McMahon Line remained largely undefined. A different kind of administrative system<sup>v</sup>, known as "non-interference" and "go slow", for the tribal communities was introduced. Administration designed its administrative policies based on Pt. Nehru's famous *Panchsheel*, the five principles for tribal development.<sup>vi</sup> One of the key elements of the policy of "non-interference" was not to disturb the tribal way of life.<sup>vii</sup> Customary laws and traditional self-governing institutions were allowed to be functioned with minimum administrative interference.

Nehru was not in favour of "forced integration" of the people of NEFA even when he received strong protests from socialist leaders like Ram Manohar Lohia, who was opposed to the government's policy of segregation.<sup>viii</sup> He would give the instance of "our bitter experience in Nagaland" as an argument against such attempts of forceful integration (Choudhury, 1982: 264). Secondly, it has been argued that Jawaharlal Nehru was keen to keep the tribal people away from the negative influences of Naga separatist movement and anti-national sentiments espoused by Christian missionaries in the Naga and Mizo hills. In a speech delivered at a Conference in 1952, he appreciated the humanitarian works of the missionaries but "politically speaking," he said, "they did not particularly liked the change in India. In fact, just when a new political awareness dawned on India, there was a movement in North-Eastern India to encourage the people of North-East to form separate and independent states." He adds, "Many foreigners resident in the area supported this movement" (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1973: 4).

The people of Arunachal Pradesh were neither represented in the Legislative Assembly of the state of Assam nor was the voting right extended till 1977. One possible reason for withholding voting right was, as S K Chaube points out, "the anthropological view that elections are alien to tribal culture" (Chaube, 1985: 191). The Bordoloi Sub-committee<sup>ix</sup> also did not favour the extension of franchise right to the NEFA. The Committee found that the level of consciousness among tribals was quite low. Till 1977, Arunachal Pradesh was provided with one member in the Lok Sabha,<sup>x</sup> to be nominated by the President of India from among the "Schedule Tribes" of the area under the *Representation of People Act, 1950*. Later, the *North-Eastern Areas (Re-organization) Act, 1971* provided one seat each in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha<sup>xi</sup> for Arunachal Pradesh, which was to be filled through direct election instead of previous practice of nomination.

A full-scale administration of the area was inaugurated in 1954, with the promulgation of the *North-East Frontier Areas (Administration) Regulation of 1954*. The North East Frontier Tract came to be known as North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). In the year 1971, *North-East Areas (Reorganization) Act*, was passed by the parliament. The Act provided a new name and new political status to NEFA. NEFA was rechristened as Arunachal Pradesh, and in 1972 constitutional separation of NEFA from Assam became a reality, after it was granted the status of Union Territory. The Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh was placed under the control of a chief commissioner. The administration of the

territory was run by the President of India acting through the chief commissioner of Arunachal Pradesh till August 15, 1975. In this year a provisional Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers was appointed for Arunachal Pradesh (*The Arunachal Pradesh Code*, 1982: 23). The Administrator of Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh until then designated as Chief Commissioner was upgraded to the Lieutenant Governor (*The Arunachal Pradesh Code*, 1982: 2).

In September 1986, there were reports of Chinese troops intruding into Wangdong in Sumdorang Chu river valley in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, which was considered an integral and indivisible part of India according to MacMahon Line of 1914. It revived the old psychological fear of 1962 Chinese aggression. Moreover, after the Seventh Round of border talks in 1986, it became increasingly clear that the solution to border problem was not drawing in favour of India. A bill in the parliament was enacted in December 1986 to establish Arunachal Pradesh as a state.

### **“Nationalizing” a Frontier Space**

India inherited undefined and “unaccepted” boundary in the Eastern Himalayas, where present Arunachal Pradesh is located, from the British India. The claims and counter claims between India and China, on the question of legality of Mc Mohan Line, has placed state’s politics and economic development as “hostage” to geo-politics and military strategy. The Government of India, therefore, has “nationalized” the frontier state through multiple strategies. China invaded Tibet in 1950 and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) crushed unarmed Tibetan guards. The Republic of India became apprehensive and reacted immediately, probably over-reacted, by making a territorial adjustment of Arunachal Pradesh, then called as North East Frontier Tracts. In 1951, the plain portions of NEFA were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the government of Assam by a Notification.<sup>xiii</sup>

Sensing the sinister intention of communist China the economic and infrastructure development of the territory was given a due impetus. The Community Development Programme was introduced, for the first time in 1952, in Arunachal Pradesh with one community project. A year later, in 1953, Community Extension Service Block was extended. In the first Five-Year Plan period, there were only five such Blocks, which got increased to 41 Blocks during third plan period. Choudhury, analysing the impacts of China’s claim over Arunachal Pradesh, writes:

China’s extravagant claim on Indian territory south of the MacMahon Line in 1959 immediately influenced the shaping of the Third Five Year Plan (1962-66). In addition to normal budget for road building, an extra-allocation of Rs 20,800,000 was provided in the plan out of the total allotment of Rs 71,500,000 for the plan period. The performance in terms of expenditure registered a higher mark over the first and second plans as a total expenditure of Rs 73,239,000 was incurred by the end of the plan period outstripping the allotment by Rs 1,739,000 (Choudhury, 1983: 269).

The 1914 Agreement on McMahon Line did not alter the ground realities for the inhabitants of the frontier areas, along the Line on both sides. The communities had usual social and economic contacts-barter, matrimonial alliances. Even after the independence of India, the social and economic contacts continued without any hindrance. It was the Sino-India war of 1962 that changed the ground situation, and the McMahon Line became live all of a sudden. The changed situation created an atmosphere of hostility that resulted in division of families and clans into two hostile political camps- India and China. All contacts were stopped, and the independent economies, through barter system, were converted into dependent ones. The inhabitants remained dependent on government supplies through air sorties. Huber finds that many of “the transient frontier groups became divided between India and China after 1962, and now live separated on either side of the contested international border” (Huber, 2012: 100).

The bonhomie between India and China with the slogan of *Chini-Hindi-Bhai-Bhai* did not last long, and on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1962 Mao’s China attacked India. After occupying certain strategic parts of NEFA (Bomdila and Walong), it was feared that the Chinese troops would descend on the Assam Valley. The people of Assam were irate over this possibility and strongly criticized the tribal policy followed in the Administration of NEFA (*Arunachal Review*, 1998). The people of NEFA had to abandon their native homes and became refugees in Assam. They too joined the agitation against the Nehru-Elwin’s “go slow” policy in NEFA (*ibid.*). Both inside and outside the parliament, the policy envisaged of J. Nehru came under severe criticism. There was a popular resentment against the policy considering it to be primarily responsible for India’s shameful defeat. It was widely felt that India’s defeat in the war was due to lack of road communication and other facilities in the State. Thereafter, even J. Nehru seemed to have appreciated that *A Philosophy for NEFA*,<sup>xiii</sup> authored by Verrier Elwin, required a second look.

Post-1962, developmental activities were speeded up and representative institutions were sought to be introduced so that the territory could come closer to the mainstream of political life in the country. The administration of the territory was transferred from the Ministry of External Affairs to the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1965. D. Ering Committee,<sup>xiv</sup> which was headed by the then nominated Member of Parliament from NEFA, D. Ering, was constituted to find out the possibility of acceleration of developmental initiatives and introduction of representative democratic institutions. Based on the recommendation of the Ering Committee, *North East Frontier Agency Panchayati Raj Regulation, 1967* was promulgated by the president of India.<sup>xv</sup>

However, even after revisit of the “Nehru-Elwin Policy,” the policy framework of the Government of India was continued to be guided by strategic and nationalist considerations. Baruah traced the roots of India’s vulnerabilities in India’s North East to the Chinese invasion. He writes that “beginning with the China war, the managers of the Indian state began to see the external and internal enemies in this frontier region coming together and constituting a looming threat to national security” (Baruah 2005: 35). So, it became imperative on the part of the government to extend the institutions of the state “all the way into the international

border”, and “the goal of nationalizing a frontier space has been the major thrust of Indian policy vis-à-vis Arunachal Pradesh” (ibid.). For the critics, the idea of ‘nationalising a frontier space’ would mean to “multiply the area of association and contact with the outside world and not to keep [the tribals] within their narrow circle” (Elwin, 1988: 295). There was an occasion when some opposition Members of Parliament had gone to the extent of suggesting that 1, 0000 farmers from Punjab be settled in NEFA “both to further the assimilation of tribals and to dissuade the Chinese from coming again” (ibid.).

The frontier was “nationalised” in a variety of ways. Ostensibly to avoid outside interference, the state administration, then under the Government of India, did not permit the operation of institutions managed by the Christian missionaries of any denominations. However, Hindu missionaries, such as Ramakrishna Mission, Vivekananda Kendras and Sarda Mission were allowed inside the territory with active support from the administration.<sup>xvi</sup> Most of the school teachers from Assam were replaced and teachers from states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, etc were recruited. The administrative machineries were geared up to promote the essence of cultural practices and social ethos of the different tribal communities. Cultural aspects of various tribal groups were highlighted in school textbooks. Stories about the national leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subash Chandra were popularised through hymns and songs.

With an aim to inculcate the sense of patriotism and to exploit the martial tradition of the frontier tribes, the Government of India raised “home guards units of frontier tribes called *Lok Sahayak Sena*” after the Chinese aggression. It was received enthusiastically by the people, who were “natural experts in patrolling and reconnaissance tactics,” and they received regular training in military discipline and in the use of arms under army officers (Choudhury, 1982: 268). Realization came to the strategic thinkers and the political leadership that the territory being vast and sparsely populated, there was a need of resettlement of people in the vacant border areas because it “will help to strengthen our frontiers and their defence”.<sup>xvii</sup> It was also felt that the settlement of outsiders in NEFA would help in developing the pockets which were lying unused and unoccupied by the local population. On strategic point of view the Administration presumed that “the presence of stretches of vacant land along the border is strategically not desirable and the last emergency had highlighted this problem.”<sup>xviii</sup>

From the years 1964-69, as part of the refugee settlement programme, 2,748 families of Chakmas and Hajongs consisting of 14,888 (750 Hajongs) persons were rehabilitated in Chowkham in Lohit district, Miao, Bordumsa and Diyun in Tirap (now Changlang) and Balijan in Subansiri (now Papum Pare) district. At present there are 44,276 Chakmas in Changlang district, 4,962 in Namsai district and 2,077 Chakmas in the Papum Pare district. Hajongs are concentrated only in Dayun sub-division of Changlang district, numbering 2,415 persons.<sup>xix</sup> The scheme for rehabilitation of ex-servicemen in Arunachal Pradesh was believed to have been initiated by the NEFA Administration in October, 1967 “following

earlier high level policy decision after the Chinese aggression in 1962.”<sup>xx</sup> Three major factors have been identified because of which the resettlement was necessitated. There are:

- i) To strengthen border defence by populating vacant land.
- ii) To find land for the refugees and Indians returning from foreign countries who have posed a problem on a national scale.
- iii) Our duty towards ex-servicemen and ex-Assam Rifles who are engaged in the defence of our country in the present emergency.

Besides intending to replace *jhum* cultivation (shifting cultivation) with that of settled cultivation by demonstrating and developing agricultural practices which were not followed in these areas, the main considerations look to be “strategic” in nature. The objectives and considerations of the Scheme, identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs, clearly indicate that it was launched because of strategic significance of the area. These are:

- i) A population vacuum near the border may result in attempts by hostile neighbour to take advantage of the situation.
- ii) A settled community along the border will be a positive deterrent against the temptation of infiltration from across the border.
- iii) The actual presence of a settled community along the border would further reduce the scope of any border dispute.
- iv) The settlement of people belonging to mixed community in NEFA may help towards emotional integration of NEFA people with the rest of the country.

In the line of this strategic thinking, 200 families of ex-Assam Rifles were settled in “virgin unoccupied, un-administered and remote border area (Vijaynagar) under planned scheme of India”<sup>xxi</sup> from 1967-71. Sharma writes that the Gorkhas, at times, were settled forcefully in the area by the government to “safeguard India’s interest in the wake of the Chinese invasion of 1962 (Sharma, 2019).” They were settled under the Settlement Proposal submitted by NEFA Administration to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and subsequently approved by Government of India,<sup>xxii</sup> which reads:

.....the presence of such vast stretches of vacant land also has a strategic aspect, which cannot be lost sight off. Recent emergency highlighted this problem and has confirmed our earlier feeling on this question. It has been decided, therefore, to seek the approval of Government of India to two sets of model schemes to serve as the pattern for planning and execution of specific scheme.....

The Supreme Court of India was clearly in favour of settlement of ex-Assam Rifles families in Vijaynagar region of Arunachal Pradesh. In a case (1990 AIR 111) the Court ruled that “the region constitutes part of Indian territory and is located on the Indian border with China and Burma. It is in the public interest and for the benefit of the public that settlement of Indian citizens should be encouraged in this area and the area should be suitably developed.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

On the similar pattern of the model scheme approved for settlement of ex-Assam Rifles families in Vijayanagar, 190 families of ex-servicemen were resettlement of near Seijosa in Kameng district of North East Frontier Agency.<sup>xxiv</sup> The Government of India in January, 1969 sanctioned resettlement of 75 families in that place at a cost of Rs. 24.23 lakhs. In September 1970, resettlement of 115 families more at a cost of Rs. 28.83 lakhs was sanctioned. However, the settlers deserted the area because of unsuitability of land for cultivation and other geographical factors.

### **Conclusion**

Our understanding is that the people of Arunachal Pradesh, irrespective of ethnic or community affiliations, need no further integration. The Nehru-Elwin philosophy and the subsequent policies of the Government of India have guided the people to appreciate and flow with the Indian civilizational values. Jawaharlal Nehru's principles for tribal development, in the initial stage of the development of the state, have helped preserve the core cultural values of the tribal communities. Secondly, it may be a fact that the presence of refugees an "outsiders" in thousands in a protected area has heightened the community consciousness. It is equally significant that the democratic and human rights of the "outsiders" and refugees need to be respected, India being a responsible member of international community. Finally, there is a need for an amicable solution to the issue of "outsiders" and refugees- keeping in view the customary rights of the indigenous communities and respecting the legal and constitutional rights of the latter.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup>The Ahoms are a Shan descent invaded Brahmaputra Valley (Assam) in 1228 A.D. and ruled here for 600 years).

<sup>ii</sup>The items included salt, cotton cloths, iron hoe, and so on. Later, during British period, it was substituted by cash payment.

<sup>iii</sup> The original purpose for the British to come to Assam was to restore order and to drive out Burmese invaders. However, they later realised that the tea plant was native to the area and discovered oil, coal and other minerals. They found the area attractive for capital investment. It was also realised that for economy to grow there was a need for peace and order in the area. Some of the tribals used to conduct raids in the villages of Assam plains, in retaliation of plain traders, who ventured into the tribal territory exploited natural resources (killing elephants for ivory, felling trees for timber, etc). The Regulation aimed at restricting the non-natives' entry into tribal territory. As per Section 3 of the Regulation, any outsider shall be required to obtain a permit called Inner Line Permit to cross the Inner Line.

<sup>iv</sup>It was Nehru's policy of extension of administration in the forward areas, towards McMahon Line. Assam Rifle posts were set-up which to be followed by opening of administrative centres.

<sup>v</sup>The unique administrative system was known as 'Single Line Administration'. The Deputy Commissioner (Political Officer before 1965) was vested with the chief administrative authority within the district. He acts as the executive head of the District looking after development, Panchayats, local bodies and civil administration. He also remains the District Magistrate, who is responsible for the maintenance of law and order.

<sup>vi</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru envisaged *Panchshell* (five principles) for tribal development. Please see "Foreword" by Jawaharlal Nehru, to *A Philosophy for NEFA* by Verrier Elwin, Shillong, 1969. The principles are as follows: "(i) People should develop along the lines of their own genius". "(ii) Tribal rights in land and forests should be respected". "(iii) The Govt. of India should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development". "(iv)The Govt. should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes". "(v) The Govt. should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved."

<sup>vii</sup>Ostensibly to avoid outside interference, the state administration, then under the Government of India, did not permit the operation of institutions managed by the Christian missionaries of any denominations. However, Hindu missionaries, such as Ramakrishna Mission and Vivekananda Kendras were allowed inside the territory with active support from the administration.

<sup>viii</sup>On November 12, 1958 he decided to make a symbolic protest by trying to cross the 'Inner Line' without obtaining valid permit. He was arrested and brought down to the town of Dibrugarh in Assam, where he was set free.

<sup>ix</sup>North-East frontier (Assam) Tribal and excluded areas sub-committee, headed by Gopinath Bordoloi, which was to work under the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas of the Constituent Assembly, was appointed to recommend appropriate and special administrative framework for the tribal areas of Assam and other un-represented people.

<sup>x</sup>The first nominated Member of Parliament was Chowkhamoon Gohain, who served as the representative of Assam Tribal Areas (Autonomous District of Assam) for two consecutive

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terms: April 17, 1952 to April 4, 1957 and April 5, 1957 to March 21, 1962. He was succeeded by D. Ering, who also served for two consecutive terms as the representative of North Eastern Frontier Tracts: April 2, 1962 to March 3, 1967 and April 4, 1967 to December 27, 1970. The last nominated member was Chow Chanderjit Gohain, who represented North Eastern Frontier Agency from March 15, 1971 to January 18, 1977.

<sup>xi</sup> In 1972, Todak Basar became the first member of the Rajya Sabha, to be followed by Ratan Tama (1978-1984), Omem Moyong Deori (1984-1990), Nyodek Yonggam (1990-1996), Nabam Rebia (1996-2002 and 2002-2008) and Mukut Mithi (2008-2014 and 2014-2020) Nabam Rebia (2020-till date).

<sup>xii</sup> The plain portions of the Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills District and Mishmi Hills District were transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of Assam vide Notification No. TAD/R/35/50/109, February 23, 1951).

<sup>xiii</sup> The book contains the policy framework for future development of Arunachal Pradesh.

<sup>xiv</sup> The D. Ering Committee was asked consider the scope and pattern of authority and functions exercised by indigenous tribal institutions at the level of villages and above. It was to examine how far the existing indigenous system is adequate and how best it can be modified or enlarged to introduce democratic working in the fields of judiciary, local development and administration. The Committee was required to give due consideration to the stage of advancement in respect of each tribe and the special conditions of the tribe). The first election to the panchayati bodies was held in the year 1969.

<sup>xv</sup> The introduction of *Panchayati Raj*, in Arunachal Pradesh, preceded the universal adult franchise. The first general election to the Lok Sabha in the state was held 1977, and the first general election to the Legislative Assembly a year later. Till 1977, Arunachal Pradesh was represented by one member in the Lok Sabha, to be nominated by the President of India from among the 'Schedule Tribes' of the area by the Section 3 read with Section 4 of the *Representation of People Act, 1950*.

<sup>xvi</sup> At present there are 37 educational institutions run by the Vivekananda Kendra, Arunachal Pradesh Trust, 02 by the Sarda Mission and 3 by the Ramakrishna Mission (with a hospital).

<sup>xvii</sup> An official communication from PN Luthra, advisor to the Assam governor, to Political Officers of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). No. RR.17/64, dated Shillong, the April 21, 1965.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xix</sup> *The Special Survey on Chakma-Hajong Population* (2010-11), Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Another group of refugee-the Tibetan refugees has been settled in the state since early sixties. They had migrated out of their homeland with the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. They are spread in four refugee settlement areas. The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, records a total of 7,530 Tibetan refugees.

<sup>xx</sup> *Resettlement of Ex-servicemen near Seijosa*, Public Accounts Committee (1977-78), Sixth Lok Sabha, Twenty First Report, pp. 7-8.

<sup>xxi</sup> Vide Letter No 210(11)/63 NI dated January 22, 1964 and Secretary, Development, NEFA, Shillong Letter No. PC 42/63 dated 16/17 August 1963.

<sup>xxii</sup> Vide Letter No 210(11)/63 NI dated January 22, 1964 and Secretary, Development, NEFA, Shillong Letter No. PC 42/63 dated 16/17 August 1963.

<sup>xxiii</sup> A writ was filed in the Supreme Court by the Assam Rifles Multi-purpose Cooperative Society praying for directions to the respondents for implementing the scheme, approved by the Government of India, for settling retired Defence Personnel. The petitioner's assertion was that that in pursuance of this scheme, which assured the allotment of land, grant of title-deeds in respect of the allotted land, facilities for movement by air, freedom to develop the allotted area, grant of advance by way of loans etc. and also provision of basic requirements of life for encouraging all-round economic development of the area, about 200 retired personnel with their families journeyed to the region and settled there.

Admitting the Writ the Court had directed that (i) The Central Government and the State Government should decide between them as to which of them will give loans to the settlers and to what extent. (ii) The Central Government should direct that the existing Post Office establishment be enlarged to handle disbursement of pensions. (iii) The State Government should upgrade the existing middle school to the status of a high school and make adequate provision for additional seats in the student hostel to absorb the corresponding increase in

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the number of students resulting from such up-gradation. (iv) The grant of domicile certificates should be considered in relation to the settlers, at least in respect of the members of the petitioner society.

<sup>xxiv</sup>According to the Ministry of Home Affairs the scheme provided for a grant of Rs. 2550 per family for purchase of live stock including a pair of pigs, three cows and one unit of poultry for every family. This was to enable the settlers to set up subsidiary occupations like piggery, poultry etc. The NEFA Administration sanctioned grants (in cash and kind) to each family in this regard. Seijosa is located in the foothills of Assam-Arunachal boundary, at a distance of 74 kilometres from Tezpur, a town of Assam.